U.S. TO SOFTEN 'BUY AMERICAN' PLAN, PG 6

Celebrity Buzz

Duff gives it back to Dunaway
pg 18

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Port Mann single span

JEFF HODSON
jeff.hodson@metronews.ca

A new Port Mann Bridge will be a single 10-lane span and not a twinned bridge as originally planned, B.C.'s premier and transportation minister confirmed yesterday.

The project, which includes 37 kilometres of highway upgrades from McGill Street in Vancouver to 216th in Langley, carries a capital cost of $2.46 billion.

With operating, maintenance, rehabilitation and interest, the total cost rises to $3.3 billion.

"Congestion on the Port Mann Bridge is approaching 14 hours a day," said Transportation Minister Kevin Falcon. "It's harming our economy and it's harming our quality of life."

The bridge will be completed by 2013 and its construction should create 8,000 jobs.

Three years ago, when plans to twin the bridge were first announced, the cost was estimated at $1.5 billion (which Falcon said is actually about $2.1 billion when a $230-million contingency is added and the total is adjusted for inflation).

COURTESY PROVINCE OF B.C.

Artist rendering of the proposed Port Mann Bridge.

Upgrades

- Highway 1 upgrades include one new lane both ways westbound to the Ironworkers Memorial Bridge and two new lanes both ways to 216th Street.
- The existing bridge will be removed after the new Port Mann is completed.

"It is an increase," said Falcon. "From $2.1 to $2.46 billion. But it is an increase that is being invested upfront so that there will be savings over the long term."

The new bridge, he added, has a 100-year design life and will not require seismic upgrades. It will be designed to allow for rapid transit — light rail or light rapid transit — sometime in the future.

The province will provide $1.15 billion in financing. That amount will be matched by bank financing. Connect B.C., the company that will build and operate the bridge for 40 years, will put up the remaining $1 billion.

The bridge will be paid for by electronic tolls, which will start at $3 per trip on opening day and increase by about 2.5 per cent annually for 40 years.

The tolls will not apply to transport trucks, taxis nor transit and will be removed at the end of the 40-year contract.

ShareYourViews
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Competition

Making it look easy

JEFF HODSON/METRO VANCOUVER

Canadian Cynthia Phaneuf practises at Pacific Coliseum yesterday morning before competing in the women's short program of the Four Continents Figure Skating Championships. Story, pg 4

KARI MEDIG/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Celebration of Lights over English Bay in 2005.

Lack of funds snuff fireworks after 18 years

FESTIVAL Falling sponsorship has extinguished Vancouver's signature fireworks festival after 18 years.

The HSBC Celebration of Light, produced by the Vancouver Fireworks Festival Society, announced yesterday that it was unable to retain and add enough sponsors to pay for the $4-million event.

It attracted roughly 350,000 to 400,000 spectators to the shores of English Bay each of the four nights of the show. It is estimated that as much as $37 million in direct visitor spending could be lost.

METRO VANCOUVER

Style pgs 11-15
Flats, plaids and perfume

Sports pg 8
Canucks re-sign defenceman

Please recycle

Dead man had ties to '07 killings

GUNNED DOWN A 21-year-old man who was shot to death in the parking lot of a Surrey mall had ties to the high-profile gangland murder of six men in a highrise two years ago.

Raphael Baldini was gunned down in his car on Tuesday afternoon at Guildford Town Centre.

RCMP Cpl. Dale Carr with the Integrated Homicide Investigation Team said Baldini had rented the apartment in Balmoral Tower where six men — four with gang ties and two innocent victims, Chris Mohan and Ed Schellenberg — were shot dead in October 2007.

Eileen Mohan

No one has been arrested in the murders.

Mohan's mother, Eileen Mohan, told Metro yesterday she's disappointed that the mystery of what happened in Balmoral Tower has possibly died with Baldini.

In court

- The morning before he died, Raphael Baldini was in Vancouver provincial court on charges of assault and uttering threats.

"I thought I would have had an opportunity to have my day in court (with him)," she said.

"The four people in the apartment were his associates and what transpired that day, no one knows except him."

Mohan said it's shocking that a judge released Baldini after he was taken into custody following the murders.

"Did the judge do a service to (Baldini)? To the Schellenberg family and to the public at large? There was no justice at all," Mohan said.

She said we can point fingers as much as we want, but until the laws are changed to give victims more rights than criminals, the violence won't end. KRISTEN THOMPSON /METRO VANCOUVER

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Landfill fire prompts air-quality fears
Emergency officials are testing the air quality around Burns Bog after a fire began underneath metro Vancouver's landfill. Delta Mayor Lois Jackson said she's worried because the fire is burning in a section of the landfill that's 30 years old. **CBC NEWS ONLINE**

Local

Kiwi comedy duo fly into Van

New Zealand comedy duo Flight of the Conchords, featuring Bret McKenzie and Jemaine Clement, left, will be performing in Vancouver on May 10. Tickets for the show at the Centre In Vancouver for Performing Arts go on sale Friday. METRO VANCOUVER

News in brief

INQUIRY Four Vancouver police officers involved in a car chase that ended in the death of a Richmond man will be the subjects of a public hearing, cknw.com reports. Frankie Lam died after he was struck by the vehicle being chased by the officers. The officers' supervisor had called off the pursuit before Lam was hit.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

metronews.ca
WHAT'S ONLINE TODAY

Video High school students given the chance to take groundbreaking course on genocide at **metronews.ca/canada**

Blog Hollywood Rants reimagines Christian Bale's movie set tirade at **metronews.ca**

Lotteries

Lotto 6/49	15, 16, 22, 31, 43 & 44 Bonus 32
BC 49	14, 17, 31, 38, 43 & 45 Bonus 30
Extra	42, 49, 53, 72

These results are not official.

Complex offers homes, hope

KRISTEN THOMPSON
kristen.thompson@metronews.ca

Forty-one women who had been sleeping in alleys or shelters will now have a safe place to call home with the opening of a women's housing complex in the Downtown Eastside.

Rainier Hotel was reopened yesterday after a $9.5-million contribution from the provincial and federal governments and $5 million from Health Canada.

The 41-unit, single-room occupancy hotel will have a 20-unit treatment program for women in recovery from detox, and 21 units for tenants.

"In our community there is a lot to be sad about," said Liz Evans, founder of the Portland Hotel Society, which will be managing the third floor units.

"This building represents homes and hope for the women in this community. This will have a great impact on the lives of the people here."

Heather Hay, with Vancouver Coastal Health, said yesterday was a "benchmark day" for the women of the Downtown Eastside.

"Housing is often the first step in recovery, but it isn't enough," she said. "By offering a range of supports to vulnerable women after detox treatment, we are giving them the tools to become stable, regain control of their health and establish a foundation for ongoing recovery."

KRISTEN THOMPSON/METRO VANCOUVER

A performer sings at the Rainier Hotel, a new single-room occupancy housing complex for marginalized women in the Downtown Eastside, at the building's grand opening yesterday.

Expanding housing

- The Rainier Hotel was one of six single-room occupancy hotels bought by the province last year to protect and expand affordable housing.
- To date, the province has acquired 23 hotels with 1,350 units in Vancouver.
- Renovations are currently underway at 11 of the buildings.

Gun scare forces school into lockdown

WEST VANCOUVER A three-hour lockdown that had students at a West Vancouver high school hiding under their desks ended without any weapons being found.

Officers surrounded Rockridge Secondary School around 1:30 p.m. yesterday after a neighbour called police to report two teenagers walking toward the school with a "rifle-like object."

About 860 grade 8 to 12 students and staff locked themselves in classrooms and crouched under desks while police swept the school as anxious parents waited outside.

By 3:30 p.m., the lockdown ended and students and staff were free to go.

No gun was found and no arrests were made.

Counsellors will be at the school Friday to speak to students about the incident.

KRISTEN THOMPSON/ METRO VANCOUVER

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Wasn't that a mayoral party to beat all parties?
Vancouver Mayor Gregor Robertson is being criticized for his inauguration ceremony. The Dec. 8 event cost $84,000 and was paid for with public money. **GLOBAL TV**

Heated exchange at YVR: Inquiry

BRAIDWOOD Moments before he was Tasered by RCMP officers, Robert Dziekanski had two encounters with an angry limousine driver who yelled at him, an inquiry into his death heard yesterday.

The confrontations possibly made the Polish immigrant more upset and agitated, which would explain why he threw furniture around the arrivals area at Vancouver International Airport on Oct. 14, 2007.

Although Lorne Meltzer admitted he yelled and swore at Dziekanski for blocking a door he needed to access, another witness told the Braidwood Inquiry the exchange was even more heated.

Sima Ashrafinia, who was picking up her husband at YVR, said she intervened and asked Meltzer to leave Dziekanski alone.

Meltzer then left, but came back later and yelled at Dziekanski again. He told Dziekanski police would come and Taser him.

A few minutes later Dziekanski was confronted by four RCMP officers who Tasered him five times. He died shortly after.

A passenger recorded the death and that video has been seen around the world. **METRO VANCOUVER**

Falun Gong rally against court order to dismantle protest hut

TARYN MCELHERAN
for Metro Vancouver

Falun Gong supporters held a rally at their protest site outside the Chinese Consulate on Granville Street yesterday to denounce a court order to take down their structure.

For 2,723 days the group has protested 24 hours a day against what they claim is a crackdown on Falun Gong practitioners living in China by their government. To shelter protesters from the elements they built a small hut that the City of Vancouver ordered dismantled.

"We think that the judgment is wrong in law and so we are exercising our legal rights to appeal to a higher court."
Clive Ansley, Falun Gong legal counsel

The group took the fight to court and lost on Jan. 29 when the B.C. Supreme Court ruled in favour of the city.

Clive Ansley, legal counsel for the Falun Gong, said the decision affects the group's right to peaceful protest.

"We think that the judgment is wrong in law and so we are exercising our legal rights to appeal to a higher court," he said.

Sophia Bronwen, spokesperson for Falun Gong, said the vigil raises awareness of the alleged persecution taking place in China.

"This blue hut is famous amongst practitioners in China and gives them courage to carry on," Bronwen said.

Falun Gong is outlawed in China and the government's official position is that the group is a cult.

News in brief

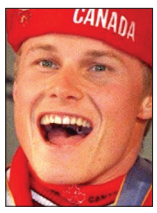
GANGS The recent back-to-back shooting deaths of two men in Surrey has prompted RCMP Assistant Commissioner Peter German to release a public plea for anyone suspecting an acquaintance of gang involvement to contact police. He said those who don't come forward are part of the problem.

MURDER Homicide investigators are searching for clues as to how a young woman found dead in a truck on a quiet Coquitlam road was killed. A witness called police after noticing the truck's driver's side window smashed out. The victim was dead behind the wheel.

HIT-AND-RUN Police in Burnaby are searching for a hit-and-run suspect driving a BMW who sent a pedestrian to hospital. The victim was hit on Salisbury Avenue near Kingsway early yesterday morning and suffered a cut face and possibly a broken ankle. **METRO NEWS SERVICES**

Olympian Rebagliati speaks up for Phelps

DRUGS Ross Rebagliati, the Vancouver-born snowboarder who nearly lost his Olympic gold medal in a marijuana controversy in 1998, has come to the defence of Michael Phelps.



Rebagliati

The U.S. Olympic swimming champion apologized earlier this week for a photo that shows him smoking pot.

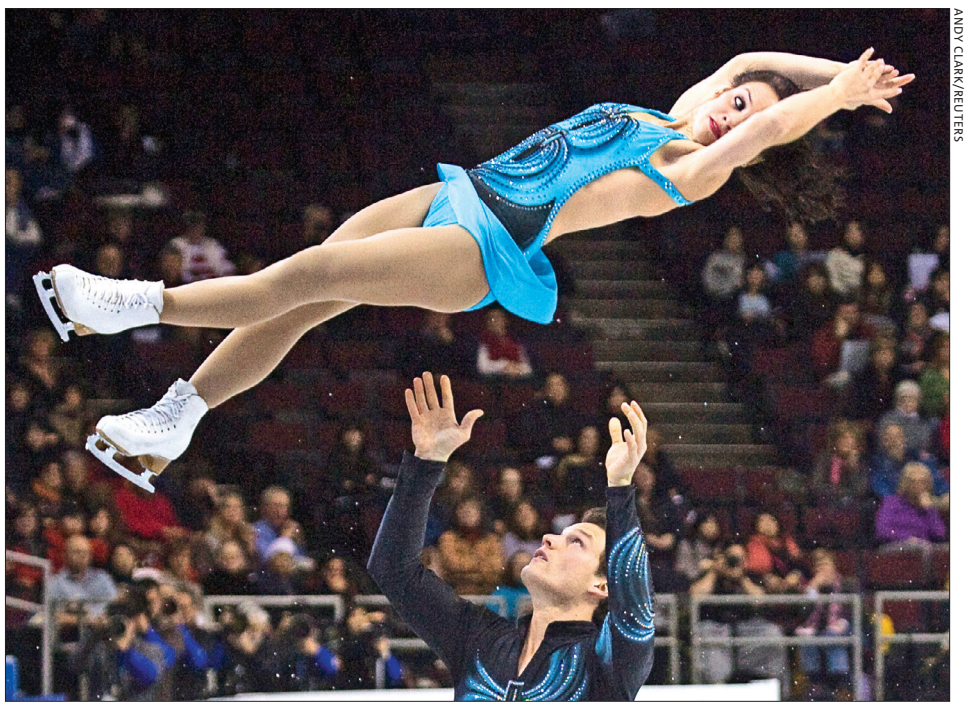
Rebagliati said the public and media need to put the incident in context.

"I think Michael Phelps is an incredibly talented athlete and it's a shame the media is choosing to focus (on) and scrutinize one photo taken months ago at a private college party. The guy has 14 Olympic medals," Rebagliati said.

"It would be a different situation if Phelps were smoking a bong at Disneyland in front of children, or promoting it out in public."

Rebagliati added he hopes the incident does not hurt Phelps' ability to market his Olympic success through lucrative endorsement deals.

"I guarantee, even with that one bong hit, Phelps is 100 per cent healthier than the average human being," Rebagliati said. **METRO VANCOUVER**


ANDY CLARK/REUTERS
Canada's Meagan Duhamel and Craig Buntin compete in the pairs short program during the ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships yesterday at Pacific Coliseum.

Get taste of Olympic talent, fever

SPORTS Lower Mainland residents can get a sampling of what the Olympics might feel like this weekend as the region plays host to a pair of world-class sporting events.

The ISU Four Continents Figure Skating Championships began yesterday at Pacific Coliseum and the Canada Post Freestyle Grand Prix begins qualifying runs at Cypress Mountain today.

Four Continents features 100 of the world's best figure skaters and ice dancers. The dance compulsory as well as pairs and ladies short programs were held yesterday. It continues today with dance original, pairs free and mens short.

At Cypress, ski cross and aerials qualifiers begin today and finals run Friday. Moguls are Saturday. **METRO VANCOUVER**

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Canada not ready to take in Gitmo prisoners: Immigration minister
Immigration Minister Jason Kenney yesterday denied a Globe and Mail report that Canada was close to accepting three Muslims from China's Uighur minority who are imprisoned at Guantanamo Bay. The men have been cleared of all charges, but remain in custody because no country is yet willing to take them in. REUTERS

Canada

Wood stoves on chopping block

In an effort to fight air pollution, Montreal city council is considering a bylaw that would prohibit wood-burning appliances — whether wood stoves or fireplaces — in all new residences or as replacements in existing homes. If approved, the bylaw will come into force by spring. The bylaw won't apply to commercial establishments, saving Montreal's famous wood-fired bagel.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

New food-safety rules unsafe, veterinarians say

Poultry destined for dinner tables will pose a greater public health risk under new inspection protocols that allow slaughterhouses to inspect themselves, says a legal action filed by federal veterinarians against the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

Under proposed changes to the country's inspection system, slaughterhouse workers will be responsible for monitoring duties now carried out by veterinarians.

A notice of application filed in Federal Court in Ottawa by the Professional Institute of the Public Service against the CFIA says it is "contrary to the public interest" to replace qualified independent veterinarians with unqualified people who are "not subject to public scrutiny."

"For slaughterhouse operators to watch for red spots or anything of the kind (on poultry carcasses) could have more serious ramifications," said Michèle Demers, president of the union representing veterinarians.

"It could have all kinds of things that a slaughterhouse operator doesn't have the expertise to make a judgment on."

Neither CFIA officials nor federal Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz would comment.
TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Deregulation

- The change in inspection protocol is part of a larger move toward deregulated inspection of meat production in Canada.

Cherry can't save Ontario teen's job

CONTROVERSY Don Cherry tried to get 17-year-old Billy Steele's job back as a volunteer cameraman at an Oshawa, Ont., arena, but it was no dice, Cherry said yesterday.

"We had a long talk. I did my best — that's all you can do."

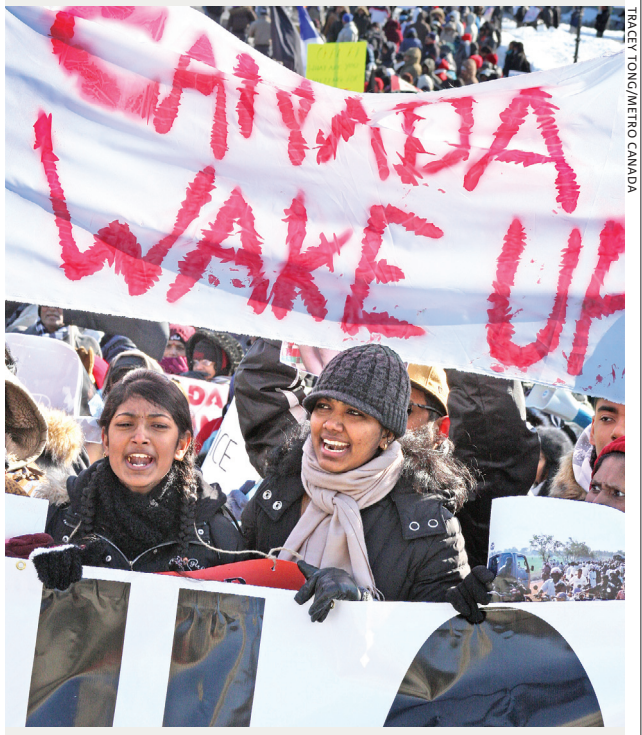
Billy was banned by the arena from working there after he chatted with Cherry at an event three weeks ago.

Flaherty says he's not planning a fire sale

ECONOMY Canada will not sell off government assets at "fire sale" prices to raise funds, even as the country prepares to run deficits for the first time in more than a decade, Finance Minister Jim Flaherty said yesterday.

"There will be no fire sales. You can be assured of that," he told reporters.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

Ottawa Day of Mourning



TRACEY TONG/METRO CANADA

Young protesters were among 800 people from across the country who attended the Day of Mourning yesterday at Parliament Hill in Ottawa to stop violence in Sri Lanka.

News in brief

TASER Sussex, N.B., RCMP used a Taser to subdue a New Brunswick woman who was allegedly wielding a knife while chasing her husband into a barber shop, CBC News Online reports. Stephanie Doucette, 30, appeared in court yesterday and faces several charges, including assault with a weapon and uttering death threats.

FEES Airline passengers could face higher costs after a cut in government funding intended to help airports meet tougher, post-9/11 security standards, Torstar News Service has learned. The plan to phase out a subsidy that would have delivered more than $33 million over the next three years was announced in last week's federal budget.
METRO NEWS SERVICES

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Man who censored the Beatles from Cuban airwaves is dead

The man who banned the Beatles from Cuba's radio and television stations has died, state television said on Tuesday. Jorge "Papito" Serguera, who at the time was president of the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television, pulled Beatles music from the airwaves in the 1970s even though he later admitted he enjoyed listening to it in private. REUTERS

World/Business

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Obama unveils executive pay caps for bailout corporations

ECONOMY U.S. President Barack Obama imposed new rules yesterday to rein in corporate pay, capping executive pay at $500,000 a year for companies receiving taxpayer funds and limiting severance fees paid to top officials.

"In order to restore our financial system, we've got to restore trust. And in order to restore trust, we've got to make certain that taxpayer funds are not subsidizing excessive compensation packages," said Obama, who has criticized Wall Street execs for accepting billions in bonuses.

The rules, which are not retroactive, would require companies that get exceptional government funds in the future to abide by the cap. REUTERS

At least 52 dead in north Sri Lanka

ATTACKS At least 52 civilians were killed by shelling in Sri Lanka's northern war zone, while a crowded hospital was hit again and Britain and the U.S. urged a ceasefire.

A UN spokesman said 52 were killed and 80 wounded in the area of Suthanthirapuramin. The Red Cross said the only hospital in the area has been evacuated after being hit for a fifth time in three days. At least 12 people have been killed.

Sri Lanka's military has encircled the separatist Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and is confident it will soon win the war, in which 70,000 people have been killed since 1983. REUTERS

News in brief

COLOMBIA An international team of scientists yesterday announced the discovery of fossil remains of the largest snake ever known to have lived. Titanoboa cerrejonensis was at least 43 feet long, weighed 2,500 pounds and its body was at least three feet wide. The giant serpent likely ate large fish and reptiles such as crocodiles and turtles.

OMAN Chemical traces left in 635-million-year-old rocks in Oman provide the earliest evidence so far of animal life, researchers said. These simple forms of animal life came about 200 million years before land plants appeared. REUTERS

'Buy U.S.' plan to be relaxed

The U.S. Senate voted yesterday to soften a "Buy American" plan in its $900-billion stimulus bill after President Barack Obama expressed concern the original language could trigger a trade war.

Senators approved an amendment requiring provisions that upset Canada, the European Union and other trade partners be "applied in a manner consistent with U.S. obligations under international agreements."

The bill had required that projects funded by the stimulus package use only U.S.-made iron, steel and manufactured goods — potentially putting the U.S. in violation of its duties under NAFTA.

"I think it would be a mistake ... at a time when worldwide trade is declining, for us to start sending a message that somehow we're just looking after ourselves and not concerned with world trade," Obama said.

But U.S. steel companies and workers who have seen demand plummet as result of the recession have pressed hard for a Buy American provision, arguing U.S. tax dollars to fund public projects should create American jobs.

Canada's ambassador to the United States, Michael Wilson, had urged Congress to drop the provision. REUTERS

Repercussions

- John Bruton, the EU ambassador to the U.S., told Reuters that approval of the measure would damage Obama's global leadership and could lead to protectionist measures worldwide.

Mumbai **Slums off-screen**

ARKO DATTA / REUTERS

Slum children, some of whom played minor roles in the Oscar-nominated film Slumdog Millionaire, pose yesterday at Nehru Nagar slums in Mumbai, India, where part of the film was shot. The movie's success has recently been overshadowed by protest in India over its name and portrayal of the lives of poor Indians.

UN tackles Russia over deaths, racism

COUNCIL Russia must do more to stop violence against minorities, torture by police, murders of journalists and, recently, the killing of a human rights lawyer, delegates to a UN rights body said yesterday.

"We are concerned at the trend of racism and xenophobia which is resulting in a continuing rise in racial attacks," a delegate from South Africa said during a meeting of the United Nations Human Rights Council.

Other issues raised at the review process included political abductions, Internet child pornography and limits on independent civil society bodies.

All UN members must undergo a review every four years, though the process has been criticized by rights groups for being superficial. REUTERS

Business

RIM settles stock option scandal

LEGAL Shares of BlackBerry-maker Research In Motion rose yesterday, ahead of a regulatory hearing that could see a settlement with the company's co-CEOs Jim Balsillie and Mike Lazaridis over their role in a controversy over the backdating of stock options.

The hearing with RIM, the CEOs and the Ontario Securities Commission to approve a deal is slated for today.

RIM shares rose 1.6 per cent to $69.36 on the Toronto Stock Exchange.

Analysts view RIM's internal review of options grants, and a subsequent $250-million earnings restatement related to errors in how options were granted, as disruptive but ultimately immaterial. REUTERS

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Monthly job losses mount

The carnage in Canada's labour market persisted in January as the recession forced layoffs across a wide array of industries, analysts say, predicting the worst multi-month string of job losses since the early 1990s.

Employers are expected to have cut 40,000 jobs in January in the third straight month of employment decline, according to the median forecast of analysts surveyed by Reuters.

They predicted the unemployment rate would jump to 6.8 per cent from 6.6 per cent in December, its highest level since June 2005.

If the forecasts are right, the economy will have shed 124,000 jobs from November to January — a magnitude of back-to-back job losses not seen since late 1991 and early 1992, according to Statistics Canada data. Jobs were relatively safe in Canada through 2008, when net gain in employment was about 80,000, rosier than in the United States, where employers slashed 2.6 million jobs.

But more recent anecdotal evidence shows the slowdown is setting in: stories of companies idling plants and cutting staff have since become daily fare in Canada, compounded by plunging confidence levels due to bad news coming from the U.S.

And the weakness now extends beyond manufacturing and forestry sectors to services as well. REUTERS

Fewer hirings

- Businesses surveyed by the Bank of Canada in the fourth quarter said they thought hiring would decrease over the next 12 months.

In brief

RETAIL Hudson's Bay Co. said it will cut 1,000 jobs, or five per cent of its full-time workforce, to cope with the worsening economy. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

ONLINE Google released software called Google Latitude, available in Canada, that allows users of wireless phones and devices to automatically share their whereabouts with contacts. REUTERS

AIRLINE WestJet Airlines is headed overseas after signing a pact to form a code-share agreement with Air France-KLM. It will allow WestJet to sell tickets for other airlines as its own. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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Comment & Views

Comment

Politics of fear and smear

Home&Abroad

Andrew Cohen

Canada & world insight

If you were wondering about the decline of our politics — or, more precisely, why so few Canadians voted in the last general election — consider the story of Bill Casey, the long-serving, independent-minded member of Parliament from Nova Scotia.

Mr. Casey was elected from the riding of Cumberland-Colchester-Musquodoboit Valley in 1988. He lost his seat in 1993 but was returned in 1997. Until 2007, he was a Conservative, and, by all accounts, loyal, principled and conscientious.

He was drummed out of the party when he voted against the government's budget because he said it violated the Atlantic Accord. In the last election, the Conservatives chose another candidate and Mr. Casey ran as an Independent.

Fair enough. Parties drop members who refuse to vote the party line (though, notably, Michael Ignatieff permitted a clutch of his fellow Liberals from Newfoundland to cast a symbolic vote against the federal budget this week). Stephen Harper thought Mr. Casey disloyal, and expelled him from the caucus. Leaders do that.

So Mr. Casey ran on his own. During the campaign, the local branch of the RCMP received a complaint that he had "embezzled" funds. He had not; the $30,000 in question, transferred to an account established for his campaign, had been returned to the party.

Curiously, the complaint came from the Conservatives, specifically, says Canwest News Service, from Diana Read-Miedema. She

REUTERS FILE PHOTO

Independent MP Bill Casey alleges he is a victim of a smear campaign by the federal Conservative party.

was the official agent of Joel Bernard, the Conservative candidate.

Mr. Casey says it was "an attempt to smear my reputation and my character." That's why he rose in the House of Commons the other day to clear his name.

He is so angry that he promises to run again (he was re-elected with 68 per cent of the vote last year) although he had planned to retire. He thinks vindictive Conservatives at a higher level were trying to discredit him.

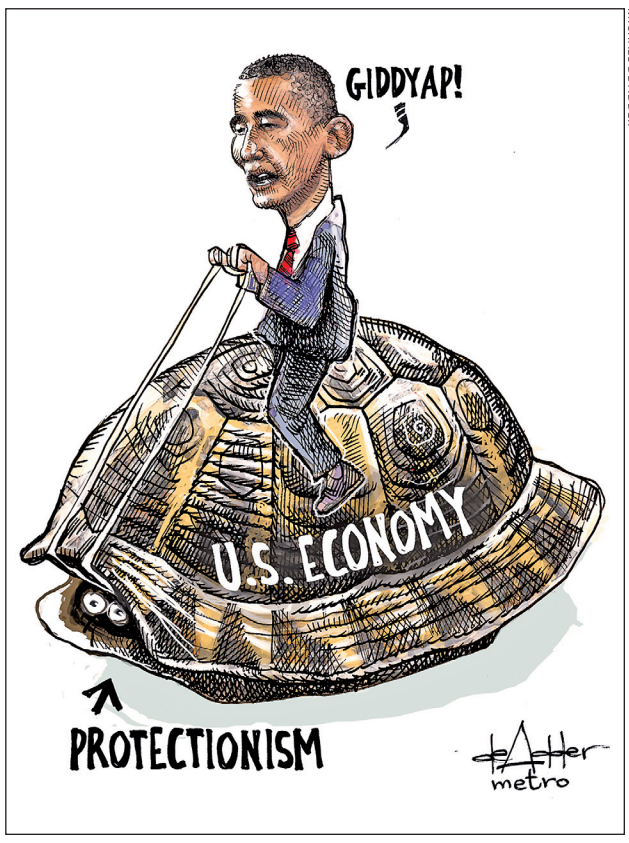
They say they weren't. The national party never had any questions involving Mr. Casey's transactions, says spokesman Ryan Sparrow.

Incidentally, would that be the same Ryan Sparrow who was "suspended" by the Conservatives during the campaign for saying the father of a dead soldier who had criticized Mr. Harper on Afghanistan was a Liberal?

And would that not be the same campaign in which the Conservatives gleefully vilified Stéphane Dion — a decent man — in cartoons, mocked his English and ridiculed his proposed carbon tax?

See a pattern here? This is politics of fear and smear. No wonder Canadians aren't voting any more.

Andrew Cohen teaches journalism at Carleton University. He is the author of Extraordinary Canadians: Lester B. Pearson.



MICHAEL DE ADDER

Letters

No absolute answers

Atheists are allowed to express their religious views too. Agnostics, too.

If God is the highest most knowing being in the universe, and one knows there is no God, one may then be the most knowing being and is in fact God. I would say, there is a God, don't worry — he's got the whole world in his hands ... or our atheists do.

As a conservative Calvinist Christian, I understand there are no easy answers, and a qualified absolute statement on God is hardly a basis for living by happenstance.

JOHN VAN EGMOND, MISSISSAUGA

Views

Atheist ads promote debate, understanding

Robert C. Fennell

Recently, it was announced that some atheists and the Freethought Foundation of Canada are planning to buy advertising space on Canadian transit systems in order to broadcast the message that "There's probably no God." Several cities' transit systems, such as Halifax and Victoria, have already rejected the campaign.

Should this campaign be allowed? I can't see how they can be denied the right to advertise. Such beliefs are clearly already part of the cultural landscape in which we live — a landscape in which free speech and freedom of religion are highly prized. So long as these ads do not incite hatred, no endur-ing harm will result. Of course, just as people have the freedom to run these ads, anyone reading them has the freedom to disagree completely.

Christian objections to these transit ads, or the objections of any other religious tradition, run the risk of painting themselves into a corner. If I enjoy the freedom to celebrate publicly the existence of God — which I do — then non-religious beliefs should be permitted in the public arena as well. If I forbid others to share their faith, or lack of it, I must be prepared to have the public expression of my faith forbidden. Such silencing on either side does nothing to advance understanding, compassion and reconciliation.

It was, in fact, Christian messages about Jesus on buses in England that first

"Silencing on either side does nothing to advance understanding."

prompted this campaign. In London and elsewhere, atheist-inspired bus advertising suggested "There's probably no God." Ironically, the credibility and durability of Christian faith — or any faith — are actually strengthened when such "atheist ads" invite public response. All religious belief is more convincing when we are willing to enter into debate and dialogue, rather than running away or shutting it down. This is certainly a moment in history when we need plenty of dialogue to find deeper mutual understanding and respect. By knowing and trusting one another, let's hope we can more effectively tackle the real crises of hunger, disease, war and poverty.

If atheist advertising appears in Canada, Christians and other religious groups need not overreact. People of faith have nothing to fear. The faith that Christians, Muslims, Jews, Hindus and others have does not depend on everyone agreeing with them. After all, Canada has matured in the last decade. We have welcomed back into public life and conversation many dimensions of faith and spirituality. Our many faith (and non-faith) traditions reveal exciting searches for meaning, transcendence and ethical living. They are all part of what makes Canadian culture interesting, vibrant, creative — and free.

Robert C. Fennell is a professor of Christian theology and history in Halifax.

Worth mentioning

First lady fashion's saviour?

With a penchant for off-the-rack American brands like Gap and J Crew, Michelle Obama could be a shot in the arm to a U.S. apparel industry desperate for excitement — and sales.

Fashion choices made by America's new first lady, who likes a mix of designer pieces and more affordable brands, can translate directly into dollars for apparel retailers facing a slump in demand as Americans cut back on clothing purchases.

"This is a living, breathing example of a first lady having a massive influence," said Mandi Norwood, a former Mademoiselle editor writing a book on Obama's style.

Industry watchers say Obama, 45, a former lawyer and mother of two girls, speaks to today's shopper who is practical, frugal and pressed for time — but still wants to look good.

Apparel stores catering to women over 40 have felt the worst of the inertia pervading the industry.

Chains have struggled to provide that audience with looks that are sophisticated, feminine yet a bit playful, have now been handed a marketing tool, experts said. **REUTERS**

GETTY IMAGES

It's your turn to tell others what you think. Email your thoughts and opinions to: vancouverletters@metronews.ca

Letters must include sender's full name, address and phone number – street name and phone numbers will NOT be published. We reserve the right to edit letters.

Francis considers surgery

Colorado Rockies pitcher and B.C. native Jeff Francis is revisiting the idea of surgery on his ailing left shoulder. In a story on ESPN.com, Francis' agent, Jim Lindell, said Francis has a Feb. 19 deadline for determining whether he'll have surgery, which could sideline him for the season. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Sports

Evidence against Bonds unsealed

A U.S. federal judge yesterday unsealed hundreds of pages of court documents at the heart of the criminal case against Barry Bonds, including positive drug tests that prosecutors linked to the home run king. They include a transcript of conversations regarding injecting the slugger, and a list of players like Jason Giambi, who are scheduled to testify for the U.S. government at Bonds' upcoming trial. METRO NEWS SERVICES

JOHN.CHICK@METRONEWS.CA

Sports in brief

SOCCER David Beckham said for the first time yesterday that he would like to quit the L.A. Galaxy of the MLS and make a permanent move to AC Milan. "I have expressed my desire now to stay in Milan and hopefully the clubs can come to some agreement," Beckham, who is on loan in Italy, told reporters. REUTERS

NHL The head of the NHL Players' Association said yesterday that it may be time to consider a rule mandating helmet use during fights. Paul Kelly feels his constituency is open to restrictions on how the gloves are dropped. METRO NEWS SERVICES

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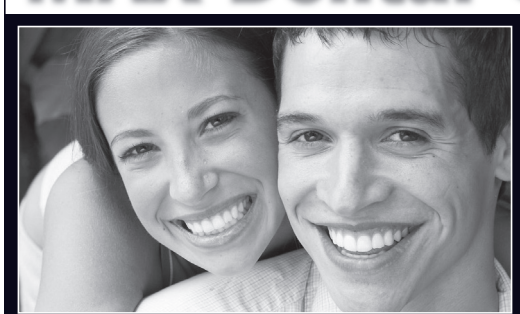

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A turning point?

ToulBox

Scott Rintoul
scott.rintoul@team1040.ca

Though the players and fans would have appreciated some breathing room, the manner in which the Canucks snapped their lengthy losing skid may be more beneficial in the long run.

Alex Burrows' breakaway backhand provided the drama required of most memorable games, but more importantly, it allowed the Canucks to win a contest in which they were less than perfect. The penalty kill is still a major point of concern; opposition power plays have converted on eleven of their last twenty-six opportunities after a pair of goals by the Hurricanes on Tuesday night.

Roberto Luongo looked razor sharp during the first twenty minutes only to allow a pair of goals that he stops with his eyes closed most days.

And once again the Canucks turned the puck over far too often, with many of the fourteen turnovers leading to chances for Carolina. This isn't a case of focussing on the negative; it's driving home the point that there is still plenty of room for improvement, which will be crucial to the Canucks making the cut in the Western Conference.

If Vancouver can cut down on the aforementioned mistakes, there is reason for optimism.

Mats Sundin is coming off his best game in Canucks' colours, chalking up two points and dominating the face off circle in proving he still has the skills to be a difference maker at nearly 38 years old.

The power play has goals in three straight games and looks far more dangerous than it did a couple of weeks ago.

Most importantly, Luongo looks like he is getting close to going on one of the dominant runs he's become known for. However, if the past month has taught Vancouverites anything, it's that caution is as much a virtue as patience.

• The Canucks could be posturing to make a move in the near future. Vancouver reacquired defenceman Nathan McIver yesterday, sending tough guy Mike Brown to an Anaheim club that plucked McIver off waivers a few months back.

Shane O'Brien made it clear earlier this week that the Canucks are looking for a consistent physical presence on the back end, and McIver may be able to fill that role.

McIver will begin in Manitoba, but could soon wind up in Vancity if Mike Gillis decides to shake up the blue-line. TSN's Pierre McGuire said teams have been inquiring about O'Brien's availability for a few weeks, and his recent decision to air his grievances won't help his job security in Vancouver.

• It will be interesting to see if Dave Dickenson goes into the CFL Hall of Fame as a Stampeder or a Lion when the honour inevitably bestowed upon him. He won two Grey Cups in Calgary as a backup and one in Vancouver as a starter.

Though Dickenson won his Most Oustanding Player award as a Stamp in 2000, he was the face of the Lions' return to prominence in recent years.

Dickenson, who retired in Calgary yesterday, was 33-14 as a starter in BC and set CFL single-season records for highest completion percentage and quarterback rating.

Want to weigh in? Send me an email at scott.rintoul@team1040.ca.

Scott Rintoul is a college athlete, sports fan and broadcaster. He can be heard Monday-Friday on the TEAM 1040 from 6-9 a.m.

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NBA Bosh hurt, Raptors lose

MIKE CASSESE/REUTERS

Kobe Bryant of the Lakers passes over Joey Graham in Toronto last night. The Raptors' Chris Bosh left the game in the fourth quarter with a right knee sprain. L.A. won the game 115-107.

More online
For more home and condo news and columns, check metronews.ca.

Metro Homes

Cash in on the credit

With the new home renovation tax credit (HRTC), this year may be the year to introduce some small renovations to your household. You are eligible to receive the 15 per cent HRTC for any renovation projects costing between $1,000 and $10,000, representing a maximum credit of $1,350. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DOUGLAS DUNLOP, DOUGLAS.DUNLOP@METRONEWS.CA

A good year for minor renos

UrbanDweller

Last week in this space, I predicted that in light of the recession, more of us will be socializing more at home or at other people's homes. Since that writing, the feds have handed out a perk for homeowners who want to perk up their places.

Designed to keep trades, suppliers and workers in primary industries like forestry in work, that perk comes in the form of a 15 per cent home renovation tax credit (HRTC) for any renovation projects costing between $1,000 and $10,000, representing a maximum credit of $1,350.

Add to this incentive the sudden availability of tradespeople who had been sucked up into the local building boom, plus the lower interest rates and it's clear that this as good a time as any to tackle those nagging little problem areas like a dowdy bathroom or dysfunctional kitchen.

PHOTO COURTESY OF VALOR FIREPLACES

Updating a brassy '80s fireplace can turn a condo into a sweet suite.

There are some stipulations. First, it's a temporary tax credit, as part of a short-term stimulus packages, so if you do plan to do some smaller renovations, this is not a time to procrastinate. The work must be performed or purchases made before next year — Feb. 1, 2010, to be exact. Considering the usual hiccups and delays that come with even the smallest renovations, it's best to move from vague dreams of something "better" to concrete plans, starting with gathering quotes for work and shopping around for goods. Second, the credit does not apply to routine maintenance or repairs or to the purchase of furnishings, appliances, tools and electronic equipment.

Some examples of what's eligible and what is not, specific to the condo dweller:

- New flooring or carpeting, but not carpet cleaning;
- New bathroom fixtures, but not new furniture purchases;
- New kitchen cabinetry, but not new appliances.

Typical updates for the city condo or townhouse include removing non-load-bearing walls between kitchen and living areas, replacing wall-to-wall carpeting with hardwood, installing radiant heating and ceramic or stone tile in the bathroom, and replacing laminate kitchen countertop with stone.

Expenses can be shared with family members and tax credits may be claimed when homeowners file their 2009 income tax returns.

Receipts for reno purchases or services are needed in case Revenue Canada comes a-knockin'.

Too bad it's only a temporary credit; the receipts requirement just might convince some homeowners to get the job done above board instead of gambling on cheaper, under-the-table trades work that often leads to shoddy condo "ruinovations."

Carlyn Yandle is a Vancouver journalist with her own room-planning business, Home Reworks; carlyn@homereworks.com.

Deep discounts attract attention

HouseLeague

As the market begins to rebound, some developers are finding that in order to continue with future developments, they must clear out existing inventory fast. This is being done by offering large discounts on completed projects like H&H in Yaletown, and Suter Brook Village in Port Moody. So what do these sudden discounts mean for you, the average buyer and seller?

There are a few things to remember when it comes to buying in discounted developments, beginning with understanding where the new sale price stems from. Over the past several months, most developers have been offering different incentives to buy from them. Some have offered to buy down your mortgage interest rate. Others have offered to pay strata fees for a year. Now, we are seeing the new 30 to 45 per cent off deals. These price cuts are based on the original home prices and not off previous sale prices. Most of the additional incentives will have also been discontinued.

The question on sellers' minds seems to be how discounted developments will affect their resale value. Well, as most of you know, the market value of any home is the most the buying public is willing to pay for it. When a realtor determines the fair market value of your home, they search for all comparables in the area that are similar to yours. This means that discounted developments will bring down your property values slightly. That being said, the discounted developments will also bring a lot of publicity and interest to your area which may not have otherwise been there. This can make your neighbourhood more desirable in the eyes of the public and help keep your market values up.

What it really comes down to is that as prices begin to rise developer sales are going to be one of the best ways to get into the market and buy units you may not have otherwise been able to afford. Take advantage of these deals because as the market gains strength, such opportunities will be far and few between. If you are selling, use the added media attention and advertising from these developments to help push the sale of your unit. This is a great time to publicize how great your neighbourhood really is.

"This is a great time to publicize how great your neighbourhood really is."

Ryan DeLuca is a realtor with Sotheby's International Realty Canada, and host of The Real Estate Minute on Novus TV; rdeluca@sothebysrealty.ca.

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Andy The-Anh guest judge
Critically acclaimed Vietnam-born, Canadian-raised designer Andy The-Anh will be appearing as a guest judge on Project Runway Canada on Tuesday Feb. 10. The-Anh is well known for his impeccable suits and his stunning dresses. METRO NEWS SERVICE

Style

Glam up your mane

Whether you're going out to a romantic dinner or just staying in, bring a touch of elegance to your V-day 'do with Goody Luxe hair accessories. This collection is available in four styles, ranging from classic to modern: Deco, Antique, Vine and Starburst. The Goody Luxe collection, ranging in price from $4.99 to $7.99, is available in leading food, drug and mass-market retailers across Canada. METRO NEWS SERVICE

EDITOR: ANN-MARIE COLACINO, ANN-MARIE.COLACINO@METRONEWS.CA

A study in contrasts

Sister behind Rodarte brand takes a break from NY fashion week preparations to dish on her works and inspirations

KENYA HUNT
Metro World News

In three short years, Kate and Laura Mulleavy have gone from scrapping together enough money and resources to produce a collection of dresses to being the designers who the fashion world's coolest members love to namedrop.

Sonia Rykiel lists the sister act as young talents she admires, Karl Lagerfeld has purchased their clothes, and top magazine editors including Carine Roitfeld and Anna Wintour line up for their runway shows. You can't get a more ringing validation than that. But perhaps the most amazing aspect of their story is the paradoxical.

They create insanely beautiful, fantastical dresses — from their hometown, Pasadena, where they still live with the 'rents. "I'm lucky that I live with my parents. Many people have to cut back in this economy. But we've scaled back as far as we can go already," Mulleavy says.

And they actually prefer to wear trousers. "I hope we can get away from the expectation that a woman designer has to design for herself," she adds.

Mulleavy takes a break from her New York Fashion Week preparations to talk:

Q What are your earliest memories of fashion?

A I think I have a few. One is that my grandmother was an opera singer. I remember being in the house and seeing these costumes. The colours were amazing. And Kate would draw these elaborate costumes. It seemed foreign to me but it was so beautiful I was drawn to it. And the other is sitting down and watching old Cary Grant Catherine Deneuve movies with my mother.

Q Your work usually has an element of fantasy to it. Where does that come from?

A Well Kate and I were partners in crime when we were little; we were living in a fantasy world. We grew up in a magical setting in northern California surrounded by mustard fields, apple orchards and horse ranches. Everywhere you looked, you could have an imaginary world. We loved The Secret Garden and dressing up.

Q Your cultural references are always so rarefied, do you have any junk pop culture guilty pleasures?

A Everything! I love that show Top Chef, although it's not exactly a guilty pleasure since it's such a good show. And last season, our collection was about Star Wars too, which could be a guilty pleasure for a lot of people.

Q You are a favourite of fashion's major players, yet you don't seem "of" fashion. How did you manage that?

A I think it all came about by circumstance, we always wanted to be designers but we chose a different path. We went to UC Berkley. We didn't study design. We thought do you want to go to graduate school or move back home? The most logical thing was to move home and try to make it work. And we didn't see the need to move. The distance comes from that.

Q What is the inspiration for your upcoming fall collection?

A We have this superstition where we don't like to talk about what we're doing too much before it shows. That way we can be secluded with our ideas and thoughts. But I can tell you that last season was about the idea of a world of remnants — what would be left behind if you told a story about the future.

Q Are there any real life women who you find particularly inspiring?

A I've always loved women like Yoko Ono and Patti Smith and Kim Gordon or Eva Hesse, who defined the last 50 years of art. I love women that have a strong opinion or voice.

"My studying English gave me tools to analyze things. The way I approach designing is the way I would approach writing a story."
Laura Mulleavy, designer

DAN & CORINA LECCA PHOTO

An ensemble from the Rodarte spring/summer 2009 collection. Sisters Kate and Laura Mulleavy, the designers who started the label, are known for their fantastical dresses.

These flats were made for walking

KENYA HUNT
Metro World News

SHOE TREND. Crimson-soled Christian Louboutin heels are sexy and fun. But after about five blocks, the story changes (they are door-to-door shoes, after all). As we watch our transportation budgets shrink, comfy flats have never looked more appealing.

Marc by Marc Jacobs ballet flats, $295, netaporter.com.

Tashkent by Cheyenne boot, tashkentnyc.com

Les Prairies de Paris, $120, shopbop.com.

Dolce Vita moccasins, $98, oaknyc.com.

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Tang opens new boutique

Psst... Another great reason to shop: Famed fashion sport designer Wanny Tang has opened a boutique in Kerrisdale, at 2029 West 41st Ave. (wannytang.com). KIM ELBO/METRO CANADA

Plaid up top, neutrals below

Style File

Kim Elbo

kim.elbo@gmail.com

ask kim

I have two things in mind that I want to give my girlfriend on Valentine's Day — a ring and a necklace. Which one should I get her?

Go for the necklace, a ring seems a little too serious for a Valentine's Day present. The Tiffany Keys Collection at Tiffany & Co. is an elegantly designed collection that any girl would love to have. If you're looking for other classic designs check out the adorable antique seal inspired necklaces at pyrrha.com.

Email your style questions to kim.elbo@gmail.com.

Vancouver's Kim Elbo has a passion for fashion. Here she shares the latest style tips.

Red & Blue
Designer: H&M
Shop: H&M
Address: Various Locations
hm.com

Black
Designer: American Eagle
Shop: American Eagle
Address: Various Locations
ae.com

Rose
Designer: Gap
Shop: Gap
Address: Various Locations
gap.com

High Top
Designer: Aldo
Shop: Aldo
Address: Various Locations
aldoshoes.com

Slip On
Designer: John Varvatos
Shop: J2 clothing
Address: Various Locations
j2clothing.com

Moccasin
Designer: Fenchurch
Shop: Boardroom
Address: 1745 West 4th Ave.
boardroomshop.com

Plaid

Minimal on the check colours and very casual, spring's plaid shirts are a definite staple. Lightly distressed, faded and wrinkled are how these plaids are being bought and worn. If you're looking for a layering piece to go on top, style the plaid button up with a polished plain blazer, cardigan sweater or a waist coat. A simple dark jean will do with this plaid style; anything lighter may look a little too lumberjack.

accessory

Keep it smooth with Truefitt & Hill's natural shaving cream, $33, and Merkur's perfectly balanced weight razor, $55. Available at Momentum Grooming, 1237 Burrard St. (momentumgrooming.com).

Shoe Trend

Take a walk on the not-so-wild side with classic canvas shoes, leather moccasins and suede high tops. This spring, men's shoes are seen in neutral tones and as low profile slip-ons. It's all in the details with these natual hues so look for the extras like different coloured insoles and mixed fabrics. These shoes will look great with lighter linens, shorts, khakis and jeans. Style advice: as the season gets a little warmer nix the socks, cuff up your pants and show off your shoes.

tip: Have mildew on your leather shoes? Mix together a cup of rubbing alcohol and an equal amount of water. Sponge on, working into the leather, and allow to air dry. (essortment.com).

Top fashion buzzwords
Chiconomics, Michelle Obama and recessionista are the top fashion buzzwords of 2009, as fashion shows roll out around a world mired in economic gloom, an independent language group said yesterday. **REUTERS**

Le Labo founders Edouard Roschi and Fabrice Penot aim to produce a "sensory shock" with Le Labo.

A fragrance pick me up

KENYA HUNT
Metro World News

SMELL OF RECESSION One of Laura Mulleavy's strongest memories of smell is the perfume Opium.

Her mother would spray her bed sheets with them. "It seemed so unnecessary — my mom isn't a perfume wearer — but so emotionally charged for us. It seemed like a beautiful thing to do for your children. I'll know that smell for the rest of my life," says the designer, who, along with her sister Kate, runs the critically adored fashion line Rodarte.

Despite declining sales in the cosmetics and fashion market, perfumed water's historic connection to mood could make it an unexpected recession upper. "For me, wearing perfume is psychological. If you're feeling bad, perfume always makes you feel better," says Romina McGuinness, a 23-year-old writer from France whose Tunisian mother would splash her cheeks with orange blossom water whenever she had childhood fits of fear or tantrum.

"It smelled nice and calming. We always had a bottle in the house," she recalls of the fragrance more commonly known in stores as Fleur D'Oranger.

Edouard Roschi, the French co-founder of the exclusive, niche fragrance line Le Labo, says that fragrance can be a small comfort in rough periods. "These are challenging times for everyone and people try to lighten up and find cheerful ways to colour each day and perfume can be something that impacts the senses in a good way if used right," he says. He and his partner Fabrice Penot approach perfume-making as an art form. Their collection of rarefied fragrances, a hit in cool emporiums such as Colette in Paris and Barneys New York, includes Fleur D'Oranger, which was once viewed as an antidepressant.

> **"If you're feeling bad, perfume always makes you feel better."**
> Romina McGuinness

Perfume sales are even increasing in some regions. The Florida company Parlux, responsible for mass-market celebrity perfume lines (think Nicole Miller and Josie Natori), predicts that its profits will rise 43.2 per cent in the second fiscal quarter according to Women's Wear Daily. Meanwhile, Douglas Perfumeries, Europe's biggest perfume retailer, posted a four per cent jump in its first quarter. "I think that in these times, people tend to be more sensorial and I am sure that music, perfumes and other accessories are used as a way to 'forget' about hard realities, a way to protect one's self," Roschi said.

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24K Sexy Gold set

Get the ultimate in luxury cosmetics with Benefit's 24K Sexy Gold set, $36. The gift set includes a lipstick, loose powder shadow, and gold embossed clutch. Purchase at benefitcosmetics.com. METRO NEWS SERVICE

Paris shows flaunt whimsy, excess

Let them eat cake. The famous French diss was on the tip of everyone's tongue at the Paris haute couture fashion shows last week.

The theme was set early with the frothy Dior confections that opened the week.

While economies around the world crumble, the small band of couture designers snubbed such cold realities and asked their audience to suspend disbelief — to dream.

Christian Lacroix's bride combined full tulle skirts with gleaming embroidered matador jacket. For Chanel, Karl Lagerfeld explored the contradictory elements of floral overstatement and clean modern minimalism all in white. Jean Paul Gaultier's Spanish collection riffed on the sultry flamenco dancer and Picasso's sculptural cubism.

Unlike ready-to-wear collections that are shown in fashion capitals six months ahead of their season, couture shows are mounted just weeks before the time the designs are meant to be worn.

The spring/summer shows, narrowed down to just three days this season, are composed of one-of-a-kind spectacles intended only for the extremely rich. Though the market for such confections may be dwindling, they continue to pitch glamour against the economic odds.

And despite a downturn in the global economy, chances are slim that these luxurious suits and dresses will ever be discounted.

Still, they attract an audience — burlesque star Dita Von Teese, actress Mischa Barton and rapper Kanye West.

For Dior, British designer John Galliano referenced the early days of Christian Dior as well as paintings by 17th-century Dutch masters. Consider a magical mix of billowy puff sleeves, fitted torsos and magnificently giant loopy skirts.

It might seem insensitive to flaunt such excess. But it ain't called haute for nothin'.

As an institution, haute couture is in palliative care. Yet it won't lie down.

And as sure as each passing season it becomes more of an anachronism, its defenders leap to justify its existence.

"Something to make people dream," said Bernard Arnault, chair and chief executive of LVMH Group and Christian Dior, after Monday's show.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Anne Valérie Hash brought a young and understated sense of coolness to couture week.

Those who attend Royal Roads are more than just typical students. They are working professionals (average age, 39) with families, jobs and responsibilities beyond the classroom. Through the combination of online learning, a collaborative cohort-based learning model, and short, on-campus residencies, we create an environment that helps our students achieve both the balance they require and the experience they deserve.

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GlobalStyle

Kenya Hunt

Read Kenya, exclusively at metronews.ca/globalstyle and check out her blog at kenyastyle.com

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Add some curve to your lashes
Curves aren't just for hips anymore, add some curvaceous beauty to your lashes with Rimmel's new Sexy Curves Mascara, $7.99. Its curvy triple plump brush has shorter bristles to build volume and longer ones to curl and separate. METRO NEWS SERVICE

Accessorize with Siriano designs

Project Runway winner set to release Payless shoe and purse collection this fall

JOSEPHINE LIM
for Metro Canada

The youngest Project Runway winner Christian Siriano is back, but this time he's trying his hand at designing shoes and purses instead of clothes.

Siriano, the winner of season four, has signed a deal with Payless ShoeSource to design his first footwear and handbag collection. It will be unveiled at New York's fashion week this month and be available in stores across Canada this fall.

The deal covers multi-season collections, and price points are expected to be in the $50 to $70 range.

"I think it's great for me to partner with Payless because my clothes are a little higher end, but I realized I also have a younger fan base," says Siriano.

"I think all of them could shop at Payless and buy the shoes because they're designer and really similar to the originals we're designing for the runway."

He joins other Payless designers and stylists such as Laura Poretzky, Lela Rose, Stacey Bendet and Patricia Field. All their collections aim to feature the latest runway and red carpet styles.

"I think people are really careful with what they're spending their money on fashion-wise," says Siriano.

That's not to say he isn't confident in selling his collection.

"I think accessories and shoes people will always buy even in a tough economy," says Siriano. "If you have a fabulous dress, you need fabulous shoes to go with it."

As for what to expect in his fall collection, it's a reflection of women he loves to dress — someone who is powerful and strong. The collection entails rich colours, Egypt and the desert, which is very different from his spring collection.

"I think inspiration comes from what I love inside. Then, I take it from something material like Egypt and the desert," says Siriano.

GETTY IMAGE

Designer Christian Siriano, the winner of Project Runway season four, applies his high-end fashion sense to a new and affordable Payless collection that will debut at New York Fashion Week.

His collection uses a lot of snake-skin patented leather with chain elements, says Siriano. He says to expect really strong shoes and dramatic shapes for his bags.

"(The bags are) quite cool and not overly feminine," he says. "You can be any type of girl wearing them."

Since winning the show last year, he has moved on to build his label, Christian Siriano and has had the chance to dress stars like Vanessa Williams, Heidi Klum and Victoria Beckham.

Siriano also has a book coming out at the end of this year called Fierce Style, filled with fashion tips with a little autobiographical information.

As for the fashion industry and what's it's really like, Siriano says it's nothing like the show.

"It's hard to actually pick up so much tangible knowledge because you're thrown into something and it's really not how it is in real life," he says. "Everything I made in Project Runway I've never ever made in my entire life."

"I think accessories and shoes people will always buy even in a tough economy."
Christian Siriano, designer

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Fundraising feasts
On Thursday, March 12, help raise funds for Vancouver Friends for Life Society and A Loving Spoonful by Dining Out for Life at one of dozens of participating restaurants. Visit diningoutforlife.com for more info. ANYA LEVYKH/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

Food

"To roast garlic with the vegetables, separate cloves (as many as you like) but do not peel. Toss with vegetables to roast."
Barb Holland/for Metro Canada

Compost
When done, squeeze garlic out of skins, discarding skins in the compost.

EDITOR: NINA DRAGICEVIC, NINA.DRAGICEVIC@METRONEWS.CA

For boasting the best roast

À **la** carte

Barb Holland
Metro Food Writer

Roasting vegetables brings out their natural sweetness, maintains their bright colour and adds flavour you just don't get when you boil or steam them.

Use a large, shallow, preferably dark coloured roasting pan. Spread vegetables in a single layer, as overcrowding will steam rather than roast vegetables. If making a large amount, use two pans and rotate the pans partway through cooking. Stir occasionally.

The oven temperature can vary with whatever you might be cooking at the same time (a roast), from 325°F to 400°F (160°C to 200°C), just adjust cooking time accordingly. Many vegetables can be roasted at the same time, however denser vegetables will take longer than softer vegetables and the size of the pieces will also affect cooking time. Don't cut vegetables too small or they might burn rather than roast.

You can roast potatoes, carrots, parsnips, brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, rutabaga, fennel, beets, celeriac and onions.

Roasted Root Vegetables

Vary the vegetables and amounts to your preferences. I like to give the potatoes a bit of a head start in the oven rather than parboiling them. Makes about 6 to 8 servings.

INGREDIENTS:
- 1 – 2 tbsp (15 to 30 ml) olive oil
- 2 to 3 medium all-purpose or Yukon Gold potatoes
- 2 tbsp (30 ml) olive oil
- 1 clove garlic, halved
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) dried thyme leaves
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) crushed dried rosemary leaves
- Pinch each coarse salt and pepper
- 2 to 3 carrots
- 2 to 3 parsnips
- 1 small butternut squash

METHOD:
Preheat oven to 325°F to 375°F (160°C to 190°C). Peel potatoes and cut into wedges or chunks. Toss potatoes with 1 tbsp (15 ml) oil, garlic, thyme, rosemary, salt and pepper. Place in a large, shallow heavy roasting pan. Roast 10 minutes.

Peel and cut remaining vegetables in 2-inch (5 cm) chunks. Toss carrots, parsnips and squash with remaining 1 tbsp (15 ml) oil and add to pan after potatoes have been cooking 10 minutes. Stir and roast until vegetables are tender and nicely browned, 45 to 60 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Other Vegetables: For something a little different, try roasting cauliflower. Cut cauliflower into florets, toss with olive oil and seasonings (as above) and roast until lightly browned and tender. Other winter vegetables that roast well are Brussels sprouts, sweet potatoes, rutabaga, fennel, beets, celeriac and onions.

Serve roasted vegetables as a side dish, or toss with cooked pasta and serve hot or at room temperature.

Barb Holland is a professional home economist and food writer who believes in shopping locally and in season.

Urban Foodie

🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐 INSPIRED; 🌐🌐🌐🌐 VERY GOOD; 🌐🌐🌐 PALATABLE; 🌐🌐 HO-HUM; 🌐 NEVER AGAIN

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ANYA LEVYKH
anya.levykh@gmail.com

Grub
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Signature Drink:
Automne Gatsby
Signature Dish:
Pescitarian Platter
Rating: 🌐🌐🌐🌐
Dinner & drinks for 2: $97

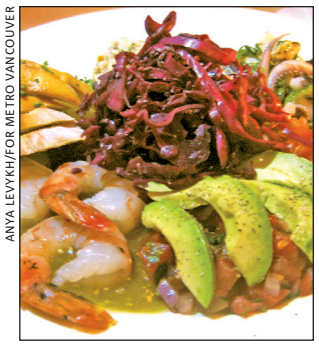
I had driven by for several months before finally making it inside. The interior is slightly irreverent, a little childlike, and quite charming. The menu, however, is fully adult and, in Pete's words, "salivacious." The stable selection of appetizer platters, salads, pizzas and dessert is rounded out by the mains, which change daily and always include vegetarian and vegan options.

We started with the pescitarian ($15), a platter for two of smoked trout, housemade gravlax, poached prawns in tomatillo puree, tomato and avocado salad, and fennel-marinated purple cabbage slaw. Much groaning and eye-rolling (the happy kind) ensued. Then came my green coconut-marinated Wetzel duck with stewed peaches and housemade gnocchi ($18).

It was almost overshadowed by Pete's orange-braised halibut ($18) with butternut squash risotto — almost, but not quite. Dessert was nice. Lemon brulée tart was just that, albeit with a crust slightly harder than one would like. A chocolate bourbon torte was also a little heavy-handed with the pastry, although the filling was nicely drunk and truly divine.

I always appreciate good eats in my 'hood and overall, it's a casual, comfy neighbourhood spot, worth getting to know a little better.

On the web
- Read the full article online at metronews.ca/vancouver/columnist/40411.
- Chew more on Anya's blog at metronews.ca/vancouver/blog/136310.



ANYA LEVYKH/FOR METRO VANCOUVER

The Pescitarian platter.

The Many Facets of Pinot

This white mutant of Pinot Noir is called Pinot Gris or Grigio, depending on the region it's grown in and the sweetness of the grape (Grigio generally refers to the drier versions and/or those grown in Italy). From Australia, try **Yellow Tail's Pinot Grigio 2008** ($12.99 BCLS), with apple and green pear aromas. Closer to home, try **Hester Creek's Pinot Gris** for a crisper, lighter quaff. $18.09 from hestercreek.com.

Dining out

SANTO VALENTINO
La Terrazza (1088 Cambie St.) will be offering their Santo Valentino four-course prix fixe menu for $88.88 on Feb. 13 to 15. Enjoy portobello and black truffle in phyllo, stuffed crab and prawn pasta, certified Peruvian sea bass and whole Nova Scotia lobster. Call 604-899-4449 or visit laterrazza.ca.

VALENTINE'S TASTING
Raincity Grill (1193 Denman St.) will be offering a seven-course tasting menu for $94 and a four-course prix fixe for $84 on Feb. 13 and 14. Try the Bay Sound oysters, the duck breast with glazed Anjou pear or stuffed chicken breast, plus desserts and cheese. Call 604-685-7337 or visit raincitygrill.com.

In brief

BISHOP'S is one of only 159 North American restaurants to be granted top Four Star Rating by Mobil Travel Guide. Our salute and congratulations go out to John Bishop and his dedicated team.

AND YOU THOUGHT Dine Out was done. DB Bistro Moderne and Lumière are both extending their Dine Out menus, for $38 and $58 respectively, until Feb. 12.

LiquidAssets

Peter Rockwell
liquidassets@eastlink.ca

Pizza picks

If you've ever been to Italy you know the way we treat pizza in Canada is a crime. Over there the combination of dough, tomatoes, mozzarella and toppings is an art form. Here, with some notable exceptions, our attempt at a good pie is a bore that takes an hour to deliver.

It drives me crazy because I love pizza (especially my wife's homemade creations) and there is nothing I enjoy more than a few slices washed down with a glass or two of vino.

The best pick is a red with low acidity because the tomato sauce will bring more than enough to the party. Wines made from the Sangiovese grape (like those from Italy's Chianti region) are a classic match.

The **2007 Trapiche Malbec** ($8.65 - $10.90) from Argentina is a nice alternative especially if you are looking to drink on the cheap. Though enjoyable now, its blueberry fruit and youthful tannins could still use some time in the bottle to mellow.

I'm partial to Spanish Rioja with my pie and the soft, wild cherry fruit with a touch of wood spice that is the **2006 Campo Viejo Crianza** ($14.45 - $17.50) will have you reaching for another piece.

Prices reflect the range across the country. Some products may not be available in all provinces.

Peter Rockwell is the everyman's wine writer, working in the liquor industry for more than 25 years and travelling the globe looking for something to fill his glass and put into words.

Kanye West pens new book
Kanye West is writing a book. The Love Lockdown singer will document his recent Glow in the Dark Tour with a tome including behind-the-scenes photographs, concept art, his own commentary and a best-of CD. **FEMALEFIRST.CO.UK**

Entertainment

Song dispute

Rihanna and Michael Jackson are being sued for allegedly stealing the song Wanna Be Startin' Something, female-first.co.uk reports. Singer Manu Dibango claims they stole part of his song Soul Makossa. METRO NEWS SERVICES

EDITOR: DEAN LISK, DEAN.LISK@METRONEWS.CA

🌐🌐🌐🌐🌐 A CLASSIC; 🌐🌐🌐🌐 EXCELLENT; 🌐🌐🌐 GOOD; 🌐🌐 FAIR; 🌐 POOR

Jenn Grant finds her voice

The Derek Trucks **Band**

Album: Already Free
Label: Sony Music
Rating: 🌐🌐🌐🌐

AS GUITARIST FOR THE Allman Brothers Band, Derek Trucks is the true successor to slide legend Duane Allman. Trucks is unquestionably one of the great electric blues-rock guitarist in the business today and the solos here are the sort that set the hairs on the back of your neck on end. On this disc, Trucks takes his solo band in a southern R&B direction more in keeping with the old Electric Flag than the Allmans.

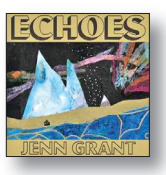
Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Music**Reviews**

music@metronews.ca

Jenn **Grant**

Album: Echoes
Label: Six Shooter/Warner
Rating: 🌐🌐🌐🌐



WHEN HALIFAX-BASED chanteuse Jenn Grant released her critically acclaimed debut in 2007, much of Canada's music establishment thought they discovered another Feist. But while Orchestra for The Moon featured plenty of Leslie-like moments, her follow-up is definitely Grant all the way. Echoes is filled with quiet folk, soft, soothing vocals and even a memorable Neil Young cover (Only Love Can Break Your Heart). Although her tunes aren't as well executed as Feist's, she's definitely got something that could, one day, put her in the same league.

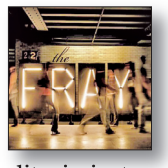
Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

IVAN OTIS PHOTO

Jenn Grant's new album Echoes was released this week.

The **Fray**

Album: The Fray
Label: Epic/Sony Music
Rating: 🌐🌐



IN AN IDEAL world, talent would equate with record sales, but we all know that reality is just a pipe dream. The Fray are one platinum selling act that prove bland, uninspiring tunes are all you need to sell records. On the band's third effort they produce watered down Coldplay-like piano ballads and thoughtless über-mainstream rock; perfect for Grey's Anatomy episode, but not so great for anyone who actually likes listening to music.

Bryan Borzykowski/for Metro Canada

Dierks **Bentley**

Album: Feel The Fire
Label: EMI
Rating: 🌐🌐🌐

DIERKS BENTLEY continues to work a successful formula — a blend of hard-drinking outlaw country rock for the crackers (Life On The Run), bedroom ballads for the womenfolk (I Wanna Make You Close Your Eyes) and some bluegrass banjo. The guitar jams are more extended, ballads more heartfelt and the pickin' a little prettier.

Graham Rockingham/for Metro Canada

Listen to this week's reviewed music by following links at metronews.ca/music

Batman producer off to Damascus

MOVIES Robert Stone's 1998 novel Damascus Gate, thriller involving a journalist and a group of extremists in modern-day Jerusalem, is being developed as a feature film. Charles Roven, the producer behind The Dark Knight, is developing the project with collaborator Richard Suckle. **REUTERS**

In **brief**

TV BET has acquired broadcast rights to Dough Boys, the debut film from Preston Whitmore's Give Back Raise Up Program, through which he finances and produces low-budget pictures showcasing newcomers in front of and behind the camera.

MOVIES Abby Kohn and Marc Silverstein, who wrote the screenplay for New Line Cinema's romantic comedy He's Just Not That Into You, have been signed to pen Valentine's Day for the studio. The love story revolves around five relationships in Los Angeles. **REUTERS**

Hollywood**Rants**

Steve Gow

Read his blog at metronews.ca

primetime 2/5/09

VA	Vu	SC	C	7:00	7:30	8:00	8:30	9:00	9:30	10:00	10:30	11:00
primetime	251	308	3 CBC	Coronation St.	Jeopardy! (N)	The Nature of Things (N)		Doc Zone (N) (CC)		CBC News: The National (N)		(:05) The Hour
	255	358	6 JOY	E! News	The Insider	Name Is Earl	Kath & Kim	Ties That Bind (2006) Nicole de Boer, Brian Krause. (CC)				News (N)
	254	-	8 M	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Omni News: Mandarin Edition		News: Cantonese Edition		Omni News: Punjabi Edition		Metropia
	250	321	9 CTV	etalk (CC)	Hollywood	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		Grey's Anatomy (N) (CC)		(:01) ER (N) (CC)		News (N)
	-	-	10 OMNI	The Daily	Frasier (CC)	Smallville "Requiem" (N)		Supernatural (N) (CC)		Scrubs (CC)	Diya (CC)	New Day
	252	336	11 GTV	Entertainment	ET Canada	Bones "The Hero in the Hold"		The Office (N)	The Office	The Unit "Inquisition" (CC)		News (N)
	256	389	12 VI	Instant Star	TMZ (N) (CC)	Law & Order: Criminal Intent		Eleventh Hour "Surge" (CC)		(:02) Private Practice (N)		News (CC)
	253	359	13 CITY	Law & Order: SVU		Ugly Betty "Kissed Off" (N)		30 Rock	30 Rock (N)	Hell's Kitchen (N) (CC)		EP Daily
	-	-	14 CW	Deal-No Deal	Deal-No Deal	Smallville "Requiem" (N)		Supernatural (N) (CC)		Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Frasier (CC)
	289	381	15 CBS	Entertainment	The Insider	Big Bang Th	How I Met	CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		(:01) Eleventh Hour "Surge"		News (N)
	287	379	16 NBC	Evening Mag.	Inside Edition	Name Is Earl	Kath & Kim	The Office (N)	(:31) 30 Rock	(:01) ER (N) (CC)		News (N)
	602	568	19 W	Will & Grace	Friends (CC)	Divine Design	House	Confidential	House	Divine Design-Bedrooms		Maxed Out
	288	380	21 ABC	Wheel-Fortune	Jeopardy! (N)	Ugly Betty "Kissed Off" (N)		Grey's Anatomy (N) (CC)		(:02) Private Practice (N)		KOMO 4 News
	-	-	23 KVOS	M*A*S*H	Seinfeld	RoboCop 2 ★★ (1990) Peter Weller, Nancy Allen.				King	Still Standing	Scrubs (CC)
	291	383	27 PBS	Steves Europe	Field Guide	Doc Martin (CC)		Poirot (CC)		Magnificent Mind at Any Age-Amen		
	290	382	28 FOX	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Bones "The Hero in the Hold"		Hell's Kitchen (N) (CC)		News (N) (CC)		Family Guy
	-	364	43 PBS	Conquistadors (CC) (DVS)		Red Green	Summer Wine	Tavis Smiley	Charlie Rose (N) (CC)		This Old Hse.	Yankee Shop
	296	654	34 SBK	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	South Park	Cheers (CC)	Half & Half	The Insider	Entertainment	Eliminate Debt
	298	653	65 TLA	Two/Half Men	Two/Half Men	Smallville "Requiem" (N)		Supernatural (N) (CC)		KTLA Prime News (CC)		Friends (CC)
	295	651	66 WGN	WGN News at Nine (N) (CC)		Family Guy	Two/Half Men	According-Jim	Sex and-City	Friends (CC)	Friends (CC)	My Wife-Kids
	297	652	67 WPX	PIX News at Ten Tong. (N)		Two/Half Men	Friends (CC)	Sex and-City	According-Jim	Frasier (CC)	Frasier (CC)	Odd Couple
	199	311	76 STR	News (N)	News		Late Show-Letterman		Late Late Show		Will & Grace	Will & Grace
news	502	390	26 NW	Supercar Car of the Future.		CBC News: The National (N)		CBC News: The National		Supercar Car of the Future.		National
	500	500	33 CNN	Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)				Larry King Live		Anderson Cooper 360 (CC)		Cooper 360
sports	407	419	22 RSP	UFC: Access	College Basketball Arizona State at Oregon. (Live)				Canucks TV	Sportsnet Connected (Live)		Sportsnet
	400	400	30 TSN	(6:30) NHL Hockey Chicago Blackhawks at Calgary Flames.				SportsCentre	Motoring 2009	Strongman	Strongman	SportsCentre
	411	457	49 OLN	Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman (CC)		Mantracker "Simone & Mike"		Bounty Hunter	Bounty Hunter	Survivorman
	410	403	54 SCR	Score Tonight	NBA Basketball Dallas Mavericks at Utah Jazz. (Subject to Blackout) (Live)					Final Score	Final Score	Final Score
	417	406	55 SC	Dave Despain	Speed Performance Awards		NASCAR Media Day: 2009 Preview				Bud Shootout Selection Show	
	416	409	144 GLF	Gol TV News	Soccer Cam	Extra Time	Footballers	Extra Time	Legends	Gol TV News	Extra Time	Gol TV News
family	552	543	25 YTV	H2O, Just Add	Prank Patrol	Malcolm-Mid.	Futurama	In The Real World (CC)		Falcon Beach "Lost" (CC)		Mystery Hnt.
	555	545	50 TEL	Totally Spies	Total Drama	6TEEN	6TEEN	Futurama	Chicken	Chicken	Spaceballs ★★ (1987) (CC)	
	557	541	51 FAM	Wizards-Place	Han. Montana	Zack & Cody	Latest Buzz	Wizards-Place	Life Derek	Ned's School	Cory in House	Zack & Cody
	553	546	56 TRE	Comfy Couch	Rolie Polie	Max & Ruby	Babar (CC)	Backyard	Dora-Explorer	Go, Diego, Go!	Franklin	Comfy Couch
cable variety	268	354	5 KNO	Recreat. Eden	e2 (N) (CC)	Michael Palin's New Europe		Adventures in Architecture		Vertical City	e2 (CC)	Sabrina's Law
	575	583	20 CMT	Hope & Faith	Hope & Faith	Dallas Cheerleaders		Home Imp.	Home Imp.	Reba (CC)	Reba (CC)	Hope & Faith
	570	580	24 MM	Punk'd (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	Video on Trial	Video on Trial	Punk'd (CC)	Punk'd (CC)	Video on Trial	Technical Diff.	Spotlight
	600	564	29 H&G	Home to Flip	Real Renos	Holmes on Homes (CC)		The Fix (CC)	Disaster DIY	Home to Flip	Real Renos	Holmes
	615	520	31 A&E	The Beast "Infected" (N)		The Beast "Infected" (CC)		The First 48 (CC)		The First 48 (CC)		The Beast
	628	584	32 SPKE	(6:00) TNA iMPACT! (N) (CC)		CSI: Crime Scene Invstgtn.		MANswers	MANswers	Married... With	Married... With	Disorderly
	521	560	34 TLC	Heli-Loggers "The Big Wood"		Street Customs (CC)		Heli-Loggers "The Big Wood"		Overhaulin' "Wake Up Call"		Sports Dis
	616	522	39 SHO	The Outer Limits "Revival"		Love-Death	Love-Death	Trailer Park	Trailer Park	Snakes on a Plane ★★ (2006) Premiere.		
	620	523	40 BVO	(6:00) Flicker	Footsteps	Law & Order "Undercovered"		Without a Trace (CC)		The Opposite of Sex ★★★ (1998) (CC)		
	601	562	41 SLC	The Biggest Loser "Duos"		ET Canada	Matchmaker	The Biggest Loser "Duos"		Trading Spouses		Biggest Loser
	520	505	42 DIS	MythBusters (CC)		Daily Planet (CC)		Deadliest Catch "No Mercy"		Destroyed	Destroyed	Destroyed
	522	506	44 HIS	NCIS "Brothers in Arms"		Lost Worlds (CC)		Deep Wreck Mysteries (CC)		NCIS "Brothers in Arms"		Ancestors
	627	528	45 SPC	Chuck 3D (CC)		Stargate SG-1 (CC)		Star Trek: Next Gener.		Star Trek: Voyager (CC)		Star Trek: Ent.
	294	650	47 TBS	Blue Streak ★ (1999) (PA) Martin Lawrence. (CC) (DVS)				Sex and-City	Sex and-City	(:10) Blue Streak ★ (1999) Martin Lawrence.		
	619	525	48 TROP	Make	Fashion	Family Guy	Seinfeld	Seinfeld	Raymond	Family Guy	Married... With	Seinfeld
	603	561	52 FN	Family	Glutton	Ace of Cakes	Ace of Cakes	Challenge Speed cooking.		Unwrapped	Secret Life of	Family
	626	547	57 COM	Air Farce	Just for Laughs (CC)		Corner Gas	The Simpsons	South Park	VIP	Gong Show	Daily Show
	320	621	60 CEN	Sasquatch Gng		Where in the World Is Osama bin Laden?		No Country for Old Men ★★★ (2007) Tommy Lee Jones.				
	581	566	101 MTV	Pete Doherty in 24 Hours (N)		MTV Live	After	A Double Shot at Love (CC)		Pete Doherty in 24 Hours		MTV Live
	261	394	102 V	(6:00) La Bamba ★★★ (CC)		Poltergeist: The Legacy		La Bamba ★★★ (1987) Lou Diamond Phillips. (CC)				Paid Program
	-	-	109 MUL	Matchmaker	Mom's-Upset	Vancouver	Kahkashan	Dheeyan Ghar	Sadabahar	Desi-Mama	Desi Rhythms	Patrol World

critics'corner

Flicker
The colors, man! This new documentary tells the story of artist and mystic Brion Gysin, who invented a device called the dream machine. Made from a light bulb, a simple motor and a rotating cylinder adorned with cutouts, it was designed to alter one's consciousness and stimulate visions without drugs. Singer Marianne Faithfull, rocker Iggy Pop, filmmaker Kenneth Anger and musician Genesis P-Orridge are among those interviewed about Gysin and his machine. 6 PM on BVO

Blue Streak
Martin Lawrence is much better playing a real cop — as in the two "Bad Boys" movies — than a fake one, as in this forgettable 1999 comedy. He plays an ex-con who poses as a member of the police force to get inside the precinct house. Why? It sits on top of the site where he stashed his loot before going up the river. If you like the con-plays-cop concept, rent "48 HRS" instead. 7 PM on TBS

Simon in high-def
Simon Cowell uses special make-up to appear flawless on TV, femalefirst.co.uk reports. Cowell reportedly insists his make-up artist uses cosmetics which hide his imperfections on high definition TV. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Celebrity Buzz

Cruise says he's a big fan of car racing

INTERESTS Tom Cruise still feels the need for speed, people.com reports. The actor, 46, shares his love of NASCAR and racing in a new interview set to air Friday on ESPN2."For me as a kid growing up, I always wanted to race cars," says Cruise, who starred in the 1990 racing film Days of Thunder. NASCAR, he says, "is a very unique kind of racing that feels very American."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Cruz plans karaoke for Oscar night

CELEBRATING Win or lose on Oscar night, best supporting actress nominee Penelope Cruz says she plans to celebrate after the show with karaoke, usmagazine.com reports. "I'm sure I will. You know I'm a big fan of karaoke," she said on the Ellen DeGeneres Show. "I have one at home," Cruz says. "I even do it alone sometimes." Her favorite song? "I do a lot of Eminem, Around the Outside," Cruz says. "That's one of my favorites. Yeah, but that (Oscar) night, whatever happens, (we're) going to have to do some karaoke."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Former manager sues Britney and her parents

LAWSUITS Britney Spears' former manager Sam Lutfi is suing the singer and her parents, Jamie and Lynne Spears, for defamation and breach of contract, L.A. court documents show, people.com reports.

In the lawsuit filed Tuesday, Lutfi is also claiming libel, battery and intentional infliction of emotional distress. "Jamie and Lynne launched a campaign of lies and intimidation designed to destroy Lutfi and drive him out of Britney's life," the papers read.

"This campaign also provided Jamie with the opportunity he needed to obtain an appointment as Britney's conservator."

Additionally, the lawsuit alleges: "Despite seemingly accomplishing their objectives, Jamie and Lynne have nevertheless continued their smear campaign against Lutfi. Thus, having no other alternative, Lutfi brings this action to defend himself against Jamie's and Lynne's persistent attacks."

Last Friday, Britney's father obtained a new restraining order against Lutfi, accusing him of harassing the Spears family.

Lutfi, who says he became Spears' manager after the two met in an L.A. nightclub in 2007, claims his reputation was damaged by Lynne Spears' book, Through the Storm, in which she makes allegations about Lutfi's control over her daughter. He calls the allegations "lies and fabrication."

Lutfi's attorney, Bryan J. Freedman said in a statement Tuesday that there is "overwhelming evidence from independent witnesses" proving his client's case and that "at the time of the trial in this action, the jury will have an opportunity to weigh the credibility of the witnesses."

Lawyers for Jamie Spears weren't immediately available for comment.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Four Aussie film stars to appear on stamps

HONOURS Nicole Kidman, Russell Crowe, Cate Blanchett and Geoffrey Rush all have Oscars in common, and now each member of the Australian quartet can boast another distinction: They all appear on special edition postage stamps in their native country, people.com reports. "Something like this — when you see your face on a stamp — says 'wow,'" Kidman, 41, told the BBC. She's particularly delighted that her children will one day "lick a stamp, put it on an envelope and say, 'That's my mum.'" Blanchett, 39, said the honour made her feel "utterly, deeply humbled ... I'm going to be licked by millions of Australians and I can't wait." The stamps show each star in two guises: In character for their Oscar-winning roles and as their glamorous selves. METRO NEWS SERVICES

Joaquin insists he's serious about his new music career

REINVENTIONS Joaquin Phoenix insists he's getting a bum rap, people.com reports. "There's not a hoax," Phoenix tells the Associated Press of doubts about his sudden conversation from movie star to hip-hop artist.

"Might I be ridiculous? Might my career in music be laughable? Yeah, that's possible, but that's certainly not my intention."

Questions about his intentions surfaced after the newly bearded Phoenix, 34, took the stage in Las Vegas on Jan. 16 in an ill-fated debut of his new career. A video of his performance shows him falling off the stage, though he says it looks worse than it was.

"I had a lot of dudes come up and say, 'We really respect you for doing it, putting yourself out there, and going with it,'" he says. "Because I think true hip-hop heads know that it's hard, it's going to be a hard transition, and people are going to be lining up just to make fun of me." METRO NEWS SERVICES

Is Madonna trying to make A-Rod jealous?

DATING Femalefirst.co.uk is suggesting that Madonna is reportedly dating a Brazilian model to make Alex Rodriguez jealous.

The 50-year-old singer, who has been romantically linked to Alex and Jesus Luz since her split from husband Guy Ritchie, is keen to show Alex what he is missing by not fully committing to her, the website reports.

A source told the New York Daily News newspaper: "Madonna likes to be in control, and she hasn't been able to completely control Alex yet.

"Jesus has been much more attentive than Alex recently. If A-Rod will commit to Madonna, then he'll win her affections. But it's not like he's giving her a diamond ring. Neither he nor Madonna is 100 per cent committed to each other yet."

Baseball player Rodriguez, 33, is furious Madonna has been spotted out with 22-year-old Jesus, claiming it has damaged his reputation. The source added: "Alex is well aware that Madonna is out and about with Jesus, and he isn't happy about it. It's embarrassing for him because he and Madonna have been so publicly linked, and now it looks like he's been dumped for a younger stud."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Clarkson says she's not gay

RUMOURS Get it straight: Kelly Clarkson isn't gay, usmagazine reports. "I get that all the time," she tells AOL's pop culture news site, PopEater.com. "People are like, 'Are you secretly a lesbian? Because I'd really love it.'

"Lesbians tell it to me all the time," she goes on. "I'm like, 'I'm glad it works for you, and I wish I liked women like that because often times, men are very hard for me, but I happen to like boys.'" Clarkson goes on to say she "could never be a lesbian. I would never want to date (someone like) myself, ever. I'm a crazy person. I need some kind of stable, quiet man."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Hilary strikes back at Faye

CATFIGHT Hilary Duff is set to reprise Faye Dunaway's legendary role as Bonnie in the indie remake of The Story of Bonnie and Clyde — and Dunaway is not pleased, usmagazine.com reports. "Couldn't they have at least cast a real actress?" Dunaway said last week.

Duff retaliated against Dunaway Tuesday. "I think that my fans that are going to go see the movie don't even know who she is, so you know…" she told E!. "I think it was a little unnecessary but I might be mad if I looked like that now too."

METRO NEWS SERVICES

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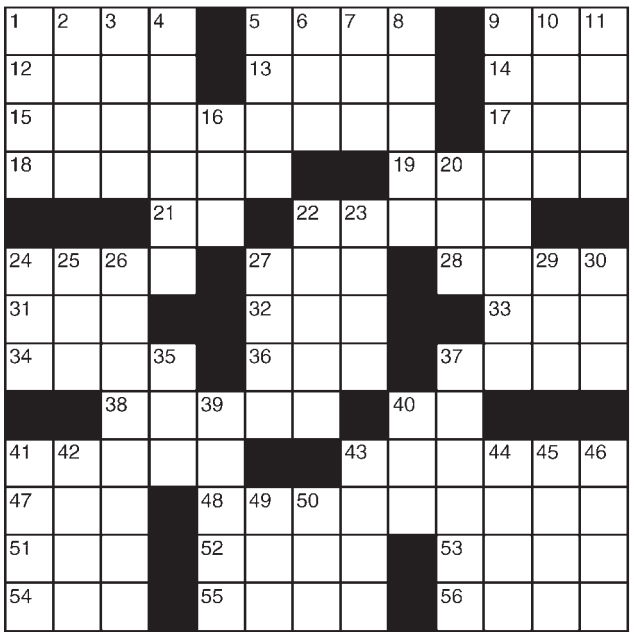
Take Five



Crossword across

1 Queequeg's captain
5 Chanteuse Edith
9 Scarlet 12 "Unforgettable" singer
13 Head light?
14 Overseas agreement?
15 Dentist's task
17 Bobby of hockey lore
18 Maintain meagerly
19 "Robinson Crusoe" author
21 Either's partner
22 Stair part
24 "Listen!"
27 Lapdog, for short
28 Weak, as an excuse
31 Carnival city
32 Prune
33 Train component
34 Clean Air Act target
36 Approves
37 Terrier type
38 Sail supports
40 Tagged player
41 Offer bait
43 Scents
47 Eggs
48 One of the Rushmore quartet
51 Obtain
52 Emanation
53 Facility
54 Indivisible
55 Get ready
56 Lento

Crossword down

1 Farm fraction
2 Coatrack feature
3 Burn remedy
4 Caused (oneself) to go
5 Excellent, in modern lingo
6 Author Fleming
7 Carte lead-in
8 Creases
9 Luggage holder, often
10 Franc replacement
11 Catastrophic
16 Contemptible canine
20 Sushi fish
22 Castles
23 Little devils
24 Store-front sign abbr.
25 Intention
26 Dorm companion
27 Whodunit basis
29 Spring period
30 Anteceding
35 Hiatus
37 Ranges
39 Guitar attachment
40 Rage
41 Not "for here"
42 Divisible by two
43 PDQ
44 Repast
45 Additionally
46 Ragout, e.g.
49 "— Town"
50 Raw rock

Sudoku

HOW TO PLAY: Digits 1 through 9 will appear once in each zone – one zone is an outlined 3x3 grid within the larger puzzle grid. There are nine zones in the puzzle. Do not enter a digit into a box if it already appears elsewhere in the same zone, row across or column down the entire puzzle.

					1		7	
7	8				6	9		
	5		2			6		
	6			4	3		8	
2								3
	4		6	7			5	
		3			5		1	
		6	8				9	2
	2		3					

PREVIOUS DAY'S CROSSWORD AND SUDOKU ANSWERS:

A	S	A	P	■	L	O	S	■	M	O	D	E
M	A	L	A	■	I	A	M	■	A	F	A	R
O	F	F	S	H	O	R	E	■	E	F	T	S
K	E	A	T	O	N	■	L	E	S	S	E	E
■	■	■	A	P	E	■	L	E	T	T	■	■
I	D	O	■	I	S	M	■	K	R	A	F	T
T	U	F	T	■	S	O	T	■	O	G	R	E
S	O	F	A	S	■	B	U	B	■	E	Y	E
■	■	S	K	I	S	■	N	U	S	■	■	■
T	S	H	I	R	T	■	E	M	P	I	R	E
A	E	O	N	■	O	F	F	S	I	D	E	S
S	M	O	G	■	L	O	U	■	L	E	A	P
K	I	T	S	■	E	E	L	■	L	A	D	Y

5	9	2	1	8	4	7	3	6
1	6	3	7	9	2	4	5	8
7	8	4	3	6	5	2	9	1
2	7	1	6	4	3	5	8	9
3	5	9	8	7	1	6	2	4
8	4	6	2	5	9	3	1	7
4	1	7	5	2	8	9	6	3
9	2	8	4	3	6	1	7	5
6	3	5	9	1	7	8	4	2

Find today's answers + play more games at metronews.ca

SUDOKU SOLVE TIME:
Under 13 min .....Genius
13-17 min.....Scholar
17-21 min .....Smart
21-25 min .....Not bad
25+ min.....Keep practising

Metro Recipe of the Day

Middle Eastern Zucchini and Onion Eggah

INGREDIENTS:
1/3 cup (75 ml) olive oil
2 onions, thinly sliced
2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
4 large eggs
1/3 cup (75 ml) 1% milk
1/3 cup (75 ml) chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley or coriander
2 tbsp (25 ml) chopped fresh dill (optional)
1 large zucchini, halved lengthways, then thinly sliced
Chili sauce or harissa (optional)

METHOD:
1. Heat 1 tbsp (15 ml) oil in large frying pan with flameproof handle over medium heat. Add onions and stir 3 minutes, then add garlic and continue frying for 2-3 minutes, stirring occasionally, until onion is soft and golden brown.
2. Meanwhile, beat eggs, herbs and milk together in large bowl. When onions are golden, stir into egg mixture.
3. Heat 2 tbsp (25 ml) oil in pan. Add zucchini and gently fry 5 minutes, stirring frequently, until tender and lightly browned. Add zucchini to egg mixture.
4. Add remaining oil to pan and swirl around to coat edge. Pour in eggs and zucchini, using spatula to spread mixture out. Leave eggah to cook 8 minutes, shaking pan occasionally, until egg mixture is almost set and only a small amount of unset mixture remains on surface. Meanwhile, preheat grill to high and position grill shelf about 4 in. (10 cm) from heat.
5. Place pan under grill and grill eggah 2–3 minutes until surface is just set. Run spatula around edge and invert onto large platter. Serve immediately or set aside and leave to cool. Serve cut into wedges, sprinkled with chili sauce or harissa, if you like.

SERVES 4

rd.ca
For nutritional information on this and other great recipes, go to **rd.ca** or check out **Key Ingredients in this month's Reader's Digest, on newsstands now!**

Horoscopes

AVATAR VENUS

ARIES
MARCH 21-APRIL 20
Being resentful will only do you harm. It's your turn to be taken care of, after you've exhausted yourself. An obstinate friend will help you out.

TAURUS
APRIL 21-MAY 21
Things won't change just because you were told they would. You'll see the other side of a very sad story. Don't let your particular talents atrophy.

GEMINI
MAY 22-JUNE 21
Neglect of safety precautions causes an accident. Nothing changes your mind about your values. Modify a faltering relationship without being cruel.

CANCER
JUNE 22-JULY 22
All you want is respect and consideration. After intense dialogues, an issue will be resolved. Find a happy medium.

LEO
JULY 23-AUG 23
When shady characters want another chance, just say no. Take a stand with unappreciative people. Don't let a wounded ego injure the innocent.

VIRGO
AUG 24-SEPT 22
Avert crisis by not responding to malicious comments. Fear of the unknown causes withdrawal. Don't rescue anyone who needs to stand on their own.

LIBRA
SEPT 23-OCT 23
Indecision makes someone feel like a martyr. Revisit the scene of a crime to clear up a misunderstanding. You'll get the best results from talking it out.

SCORPIO
OCT 24-NOV 22
People cringe when you speak your mind. Insecurity due to a forced change will frustrate you. Some harsh facts will hit an alienated friend too hard.

SAGITTARIUS
NOV 23-DEC 21
An angry man says the wrong thing about your opinions. Someone's need for affection is a problem. Keep track of all the issues that cause insomnia.

CAPRICORN
DEC 22-JAN 20
Handle overwrought emotions with extreme care. You'll work harder to complete tasks. Don't ask what love can do for you, but what you can do for love.

AQUARIUS
JAN 21-FEB 18
Allow yourself to be sentimental if the urge arises. You'll seek understanding because of a moral dilemma. Be kind when some big plans come to a halt.

PISCES
FEB 19-MARCH 20
Veer away from discord when a man interferes with your enjoyment. Your determination will help you to succeed. Stand firm if an injustice takes place.

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IN THEATRES FEBRUARY 6

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